

FROM THE

# FIELD

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B I M O N T H L Y N E W S L E T T E R



US Peace Corps in Ukraine

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# HOSHA may be small, but it's WIRED

In the village of Hosha, in the northwestern part of Ukraine, the head of Hoshanski Regional Gymnasium's English Department sits down at a computer and with the gentle coaxing of the Peace Corps Volunteer Jon Kendrick tentatively moves the mouse and clicks, and clicks, and clicks again.

During the twenty-some years Neonila Nikolaivna has been teaching English in a Ukrainian school, she has fallen in love with Edinburgh, Scotland, but before today she has never seen a picture of it. Neonila spent an hour gazing at pictures and reading about Scotland on Wikipedia before she typed, one key at a time, an inquiry for her other passion, the one that borders nearly on obsession—Richard Gere. She smiles in delight as his face pops up on the screen.

Hosha may seem like an unlikely place for an internet café; its population of 5,000 lives in a collection of houses and squat apartment buildings left over from forced Soviet collectivization. Horse-drawn carts are as common as cars, and the main business, other than subsistence farming, is working at the town's meat factory.

Jon knew he could write a Peace Corps SPA grant and maybe receive the funds necessary to set up a café, but if it wasn't profitable then it wouldn't survive. His school could barely cover the costs they currently had, the monthly cost of internet access would be impossible to maintain. The café had to be profitable.

Hosha's internet café opened on July 1 and found itself confronted with a teeming horde of . . . one customer. "Anytime you start a new business it takes a while to be successful," said Kendrick. "It's a village, and people haven't used internet before. They don't know why it's important. So now we are creating articles in the local gazette every week, saying things you can do on the internet. 'Oh, look, I can talk to my relatives in Poland on voice over internet protocol. Or search for jobs online. Or I can look up Richard Gere.'"

Although they had only one customer on their first day, they had three on the second, and the attendance has been rising since then. Soon the day will come when Hosha won't be able to remember a time when they didn't have internet access.



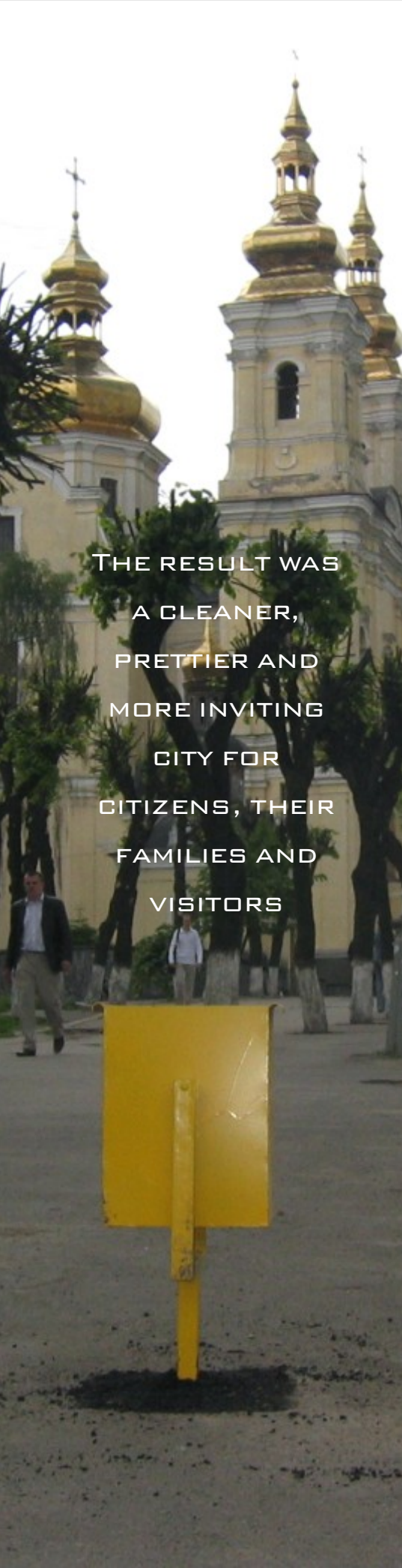
**Google it:** Gymnasium can be found on the Net

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**Great Partners:** Viktoriya Bukatevych, Jon's Counterpart







THE RESULT WAS  
A CLEANER,  
PRETTIER AND  
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CITY FOR  
CITIZENS, THEIR  
FAMILIES AND  
VISITORS

## NATIVE CITY, CLEAN CITY: Cleaning up Vinnytsia one trashcan at a time

**T**he people of Vinnytsia recognized a problem in the litter on their streets. They asked for a small amount of assistance to get started, and they received it. The result was a cleaner, prettier and more inviting city for citizens, their families and visitors.

Peace Corps Volunteer Eric Jacobs works at the Vinnytsia Entrepreneurial Club, a non-government organization (NGO) focusing on government transparency and the development of a sustainable civil society. Eric and his NGO, with support from other local NGOs and the city administration, formed a team to implement the “Clean City” project.

A Small Projects Assistance (SPA) grant from the U.S. Peace Corps made it possible for the Clean City team to purchase and install 55 bright yellow, street-side metal trashcans and 20 metal marketing signs. The trashcans read “Native City, Clean City” in Ukrainian.

The city administration installed the cans, and it now collects trash from them every day. In addition, Vinnytsia Entrepreneurial Club led community meetings to discuss the city's litter problems, potential solutions and other related issues facing Vinnytsia. Relationships developed during those meetings demonstrated the benefits of working together to the city administration and local NGOs.

Anti-littering educational materials were also created as a part of the project. The team distributed these materials to teachers throughout the city and oblast. Several Peace Corps Volunteers serving as English teachers in the Vinnytsia oblast used the materials in their classrooms.

While the initial scope of the Clean City project was small for such a large city (350,000 people), the project instilled hope and active responses from local citizens. Following the installation of the first 55 cans, hundreds of similar new yellow trashcans have been installed throughout the city by the city administration. Less trash is on the streets, in the parks and in the river.

The Clean City project's success motivated other communities to pursue similar clean-up efforts. Peace Corps Volunteers in regional town centers in Vinnytska and Mykolayivska oblasts are working on similar projects in their communities. As in Vinnytsia, the focus of these projects are citizen involvement and community development.

# WE CARE!

“We Care” was the slogan of this year's Peace Corps HIV/AIDS education training organized in Kyiv with support from the President Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). Given recent trends showing a steep growth in HIV infection among young people from small towns and villages, this program supports targeted HIV education projects reaching an otherwise neglected population.

The seminar was designed to kick off a year-long program of community-driven HIV prevention training among youth. Seventy Peace Corps Volunteers and their community partners from 64 different towns and villages across Ukraine attended the training. The 4-day event was designed and organized by Peace Corps in cooperation with experts from the United Nations Population Fund, the International HIV/AIDS Alliance, the All-Ukrainian Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS and the Odessa Municipal Police Department. Sessions covered topics on the biology and transmission of HIV, behavior change, stigma and discrimination, project design and monitoring and reporting.

To enhance practical understanding, participants also visited HIV-services around Kyiv, including an AIDS hospice, a center for HIV counseling and testing, a treatment center and a day care center for families affected by HIV. They spoke to people with AIDS receiving antiretroviral treatment, to nurses conducting counseling and testing and to social workers providing support to HIV+ families. One AIDS patient commented, “We never have guests here at the ward, I suffer in silence. I am happy that people know and care.”

A student theatre group from Hadiach in the Poltava Region worked with a Volunteer and her counterpart to produce a performance of biographical sketches of people living with HIV. Issues such as peer pressure, drug use, unsafe sex and stigma and discrimination of people living with HIV/AIDS were addressed. One 14 year old actress said, “By meeting people with HIV and sharing their story with others, they can see how HIV affects all of us.”

Before and after training surveys indicated a significant increase in the knowledge, tolerance and healthy behavior attitudes of the workshop participants. Following the workshop, 93% of Ukrainians and 100% of Americans expressed their readiness to work with HIV/AIDS. As one community counterpart said at the end of training, “You have shown me that my help is needed to prevent HIV and I can make a difference in my community.”

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**And we support people living with AIDS:** Participants visit AIDS hospice in Kyiv

“YOU HAVE  
SHOWN ME THAT  
MY HELP IS  
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AND I CAN MAKE  
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**Learn about STI:  
(Sexually Transmitted Infections):**  
Maria Didenko and Natalia Kovner  
facilitating the session





Take me to the next stop:  
Orphans and PCVs having fun

# "I will WAIT FOR YOU until the Spring"

"As always, we are so happy to see you, our American friends. This day has become a great tradition," said Olena Voldymyryvna, director of the orphanage, as she welcomed the Peace Corps Volunteers back for another softball tournament. Serhiy, a child from the orphanage, echoed the sentiment to Dolynska PCV Christina Bell when he told her, "We have been waiting for you since last spring!"

Such are the sentiments of children at the Kirovohrad orphanage as the biannual Charity Softball Tournament at Pioneersky Stadium comes to a close. The softball tournament may be the purpose of the event in the Kirovohrad oblast, but the highlight of the weekend is, without question, the visit to the orphanage.

During their visit, volunteers from all over Ukraine competed with the children in relay races, a mini-marathon and a treacherous game of Snap-the-Whip. The competitions were organized by the orphanage staff. Olena Sydorenko, a Ukrainian student who tutors and plays with the children at the orphanage, was on hand to help translate. After the competitions, each child received a personalized envelope containing art supplies and candy. The envelopes were decorated by the children from PCV Kristen Stolt's 6th form English classes in Dolynska. The envelopes had the name of each child written in Cyrillic by PCVs Jan Lewis and Ashley Milsop from Ul'janovka and Kobeljaky, respectively, and by Olena Sydorenko.

Although the softball tournament happens only twice a year, Greg Deuchars, a PCV in Kirovohrad, visits the children every Sunday morning. He was invited to the orphanage when he first arrived at site in January, 2006, by Olena Sydorenko and Olena Maloxatko, both of whom tutor English and play games with the children on a regular basis.

And, now it's another wait until the spring again. It may seem long, but the rewards are great . . . on both sides.

DURING THEIR  
VISIT WITH THE  
CHILDREN,  
VOLUNTEERS  
FROM ALL OVER  
UKRAINE, AND  
THE CHILDREN  
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**TEXT ON THE COVER PHOTO** reads: 'I promise to help in HIV/AIDS prevention'

Please submit your entries via e-mail to: [hshymonovych@ua.peacecorps.gov](mailto:hshymonovych@ua.peacecorps.gov)  
by the last week of each month.



FROM THE **FIELD**  
BIMONTHLY NEWSLETTER



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